

*Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) tonight released the following statement in response to President Barack Obama's second State of the Union address.*

"Tonight, President Barack Obama spoke on the need to get America back to work by restoring our competitive edge and getting our fiscal house in order. Over the last two tough years, we've prevented a second Great Depression, stabilized the global financial system and made substantial investments in our future. Today, we've seen 11 straight months of job creation, but I agree with the president - so much more needs to be done to restore economic growth and rebuild the middle class.

"Like the president, my top priority in the new Congress is job creation. America can't balance its budget when far too many Americans are out of work and can't balance their own budgets. To turn things around, we must start by fixing our roads, bridges and crumbling schools, help states end layoffs of teachers, firefighters and police, and continue partnering with businesses to harness the power of clean, safe alternative energies like wind and solar.

"That's why I commend the president for his commitment to transfer the money we spend on subsidies for already-profitable Big Oil companies to new investments in our alternative energy future. Doing so will help strengthen the investments in prosperity and opportunity that have already proven so effective in our part of New York. It will strengthen solar energy in the Hudson Valley, where federal resources I've secured have already created hundreds of new jobs. In Ithaca, it will support manufacturers of 21st-century battery technologies that have sprung up in response to the Department of Defense's commitment to renewable fuels that I've worked to usher along. In Orange County, it will build on the success of a \$100 million Department of Energy loan guarantee that is constructing a cutting edge biomass energy facility. And at Binghamton University it will help grow new energy programs that have already created hundreds of new jobs with over a dozen area companies.

"We New Yorkers are already proving that America can reshape its economic future and, by manufacturing our own renewable energy, reclaim control of its energy security by reducing our reliance on oil imported from hostile nations. But to continue on this path of progress, as President Obama explained, we must remain competitive. That's why I authored, and the President signed into law, a provision that requires solar energy panels purchased by the Department of Defense to be made in America and why I'm working to curtail illegal subsidies and Chinese currency manipulation that take away our competitive edge.

"We will not sustain an economy that doesn't produce anything and I reject the cynics who say that 'Made in America' are the words of a bygone era. We need to build on our progress by negotiating trade agreements that lift workers up, instead of bringing American workers down to the level of those in Mexico and China. It's time for fair trade that supports American workers - not more free trade policies that export American jobs.

"As we move our economy forward, we must also fight to close the gulf between the rich and the rest of us. With the wealthiest one percent taking home more than the entire middle class combined and two-thirds of American families now living paycheck to paycheck, it isn't right that millionaires just received a new \$100,000 a year tax cut while those making under \$20,000 a year will face a higher tax burden this year than they did last year. I voted against that tax policy, because I knew it was unfair and would increase the deficit by over \$800 billion. To ensure that our future prosperity is shared by all Americans and that our budget is balanced over the long run, we need to invest wisely and tax fairly. It's long since time we did both.

"In summation, I share the President's belief that our best days are still ahead, because the American spirit of innovation and ingenuity is still alive and well. And, I also agree that in this competitive global marketplace our economic destiny is uniquely tied to our willingness to win the future by making the right investments in it. By remaking our priorities to reflect the demands of a changing world, making the tough decisions to balance our budget and working to ensure that Americans are working their way into the middle class instead of falling out of it, I know that the next generation will live to see a greater America than that which our parents gave to us."